

I am testifying in support of an amended HB5710 supported by Rep. Roberta Willis regarding the protection of CT State lands, formerly under the stewardship of the State Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and subsequently merged into Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), which led to a conflicted mandate as evidenced by DEEP inaction and inadequate compensation for trespass on 2.5 acres of Housatonic Forest on Canaan Mountain in Canaan, CT. Such trespass activity resulted in the destruction and loss of timber resources containing rare old growth forest in May of 2010. Such loss was only noticed after it was brought to DEEP's attention by the Berkshire Litchfield Environmental Council of Canaan, CT and was further mishandled internally by claiming DEEP administrative action instead of referring to the State's Attorney General for enforcement authority. The amendment to the bill states that the DEEP Commissioner should be held accountable for a trespass and encroachment report to update the status of such referrals to the Attorney General or State's Attorney and to assure appropriate action in order that additional legal action is not needed to remedy such transgressions on state and open space protected lands.

Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

Leila Baroody

Salisbury, CT